

Piscataway language

Piscataway is an extinct Algonquian language formerly spoken by the Piscataway, a dominant chiefdom in southern Maryland on the Western Shore of the Chesapeake Bay at time of contact with English settlers.^[3] Piscataway, also known as *Conoy* (from the Iroquois ethnonym for the tribe), is considered a dialect of Nanticoke.^[4]

This designation is based on the scant evidence available for the Piscataway language. The Doeg tribe, then located in present-day Northern Virginia, are also thought to have spoken a form of the same language. These dialects were intermediate between the Native American language Lenape spoken to the north of this area (in present-day Delaware, New Jersey, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, and Connecticut) and the Powhatan language, formerly spoken to the south, in what is now Tidewater Virginia.

Contents

Classification

History

Phonology

Notes

References

Classification

Piscataway is classified as an Eastern Algonquian language:

- Algic (42) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20160912144400/https://www.ethnologue.com/subgroups/algic-1>)
 - Algonquian (40) (<http://www.ethnologue.com/subgroups/algonquian-1>)
 - Eastern Algonquian (12) (<http://www.ethnologue.com/subgroups/eastern-algonquian-1>)
 - Nanticoke-Conoy (2)
 - Nanticoke [nnt] (A language of United States (<http://www.ethnologue.com/country/US>))
 - Piscataway [psy] (A language of United States (<http://www.ethnologue.com/country/US>))

Piscataway	
	Conoy
Native to	United States
Region	Maryland
Extinct	(date missing)
Language family	<div>Algic<ul style="list-style-type: none">Algonquian<ul style="list-style-type: none">Eastern Algonquian<ul style="list-style-type: none">Piscataway</div>
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	psy
Glottolog	pisc1239 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/pisc1239) ^[1]



Catholic Catechism prayers handwritten in the Piscataway, Latin, and English languages by a Catholic missionary to the Piscataway tribe, Andrew White, SJ, ca. 1634—1640. Lauinger Library, Georgetown University^[2]

History

Piscataway is not spoken today, but records of the language still exist. According to *The Languages of Native North America*, Piscataway, otherwise called Conoy (from the Iroquois name for the tribe), was a dialect of Nanticoke.^[4] This assignment depends on the insufficient number of accessible documents of both Piscataway and Nanticoke. It is identified with the Lenape dialects (Unlachtigo, Unami, and Muncy; spoken in what is now called Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut), and is more closely connected to Powhatan, which was formerly spoken in the area of present-day Virginia. The first speakers lived on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay, today part of Maryland. In particular, they occupied the range of the lower Potomac and Patuxent River seepages.

The Jesuit evangelist Father Andrew White translated the Roman Catholic Catechism into the Piscataway language in 1610, and other English teachers gathered Piscataway language materials. The original copy is a five-page Roman Catholic instruction written in Piscataway; it is the main surviving record of the language.^[5]

Phonology

This section gives the phoneme inventory as reconstructed by Mackie (2006).

Consonants

		<u>Bilabial</u>	<u>Alveolar</u>	<u>Post-alveolar</u>	<u>Palatal</u>	<u>Velar</u>	<u>Glottal</u>
<u>Plosive</u>		p	t			k	
<u>Affricate</u>				tʃ			
<u>Nasal</u>		m	n				
<u>Fricative</u>	plain		s	ʃ		x	h
	voiced		z				
<u>Approximant</u>		w			j		

Vowels

	<u>Short</u>	<u>Long</u>
<u>Close</u>	i	
<u>Mid</u>	e	eː
<u>Open</u>	a	
<u>Back-mid</u>	o	oː
<u>Back-close</u>	u	uː

[5]

Notes

- Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Piscataway" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/pisc1239>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.

2. "Manuscript prayers in Piscataway ." (<http://www.library.georgetown.edu/dept/speccoll/treasures/items2new.htm>) Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20180928043909/https://www.library.georgetown.edu/dept/speccoll/treasures/items2new.htm>) 2018-09-28 at the [Wayback Machine](#) *Treasures of Lauinger Library*. (retrieved 4 Jan 2010)
3. Raymond G. Gordon Jr., ed. 2005. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. 15th edition. Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics.
4. Mithun, Marianne (1999). *The languages of Native North America*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-23228-7.
5. Mackie, Lisa (2006). "Fragments of Piscataway: A Preliminary Description" (https://web.archive.org/web/20160804132441/http://pubman.mpdl.mpg.de/pubman/item/escidoc:407325:5/component/escidoc:407324/piscataway_mackie2006_s.pdf) (PDF). Archived from the original (http://pubman.mpdl.mpg.de/pubman/item/escidoc:407325:5/component/escidoc:407324/piscataway_mackie2006_s.pdf) (PDF) on August 4, 2016. Retrieved February 12, 2016.

References

- Mackie, Lisa (2006). *Fragments of Piscataway: A Preliminary Description*. Retrieved February 12, 2016.
- OLAC resources in and about the Piscataway language (http://www.language-archives.org/language/psy#other_resources1)
- A section of a catechism, probably in the Piscataway language (<http://www.msa.md.gov/msa/speccol/sc2200/sc2221/000017/000008/pdf/d005003a.pdf>), written by Andrew White, S.J.
- Nanticoke Language [archive] (<http://www.bigorrin.org/archive26.htm>)
- Fragments of Piscataway: A Preliminary Description (http://pubman.mpdl.mpg.de/pubman/item/escidoc:407325:5/component/escidoc:407324/piscataway_mackie2006_s.pdf)
- Nanticoke Color Words (http://www.native-languages.org/nanticoke_colors.htm)
- <http://www.ethnologue.com/language/psy>

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